

**Education Governance Responses**  
**Waterbury Meeting - Crossett Brook Elementary School (Duxbury)**

32 Attendees (facilitated by George Appenzeller)

**Question #1: What are the advantages and disadvantages of the present education governance system in your community?:**

**Advantages**

Community involvement in local board initiatives creates a culture that reflects the values of the community.

Keeps decision making close to home

People who govern the school have relationships with principals and teachers

Flex and creativity at local level

Involvement of larger numbers of people

Responsiveness and passion

Perceived local control local needs met

More representatives onboard from each town – have relationships with community members

More community involvement

Broader representation of community

Allows for individual schools to make unique and independent decisions

Gets more people involved

Spreads the work amongst more volunteers/board members

Voters have sense of local control

More opportunity for innovation and independence

Local control

More individual attention to local issues and infrastructure

Commitment to community

**Disadvantages**

Coordination of services, P.D., curriculum efforts and assessments are still challenging

Disconnect between elementary and high school

Lacking unification.....little fiefdoms

Inefficiency

Fractured administrative chain of command

Difficult to implement district wide initiatives

Different curriculum

1-Duplication of effort (policies, planning, etc)

Different teacher contracts – hard to retain and recruit

2-In non K-12 districts, lack of focus on K-12 issues/transition

3-Inability to move/share staff between schools

Town lines make a poor district

Small school districts hurt by Act 68

Everyone gets a very small piece of central office personnel

Principals spend too much time on board issues

Lots of duplication of systems – not necessarily kid issues – i.e. policies, contracts, payroll

Duplicative of efforts

Limits public involvement in overall Ed. system

Can be more costly

Spreads Supers out  
Inconsistency of school policies and curriculum  
Inconsistency of Ed. Quality  
System too confusing/complex  
Contract Negotiations multiple, time consuming  
Hard to attract good super. candidates  
Not enough time on educational issues  
Too many boards going in different directions  
Not enough coordination/consolidation of spending

**Question #2: What are the advantages and disadvantages of the school district model suggested by Commissioner Cate in his White Paper?**

**Advantages**

1-Coordinate and maximize resources  
Flexible to move teachers and staff and students  
Maximize-more bang for buck from supervisory union staff  
Small towns benefit financially  
2-Less micromanaging by school boards  
3-Focus on preK-l2 vs. individual schools  
Common teacher contract  
Common and coordinated resources across the district – i.e. policies, contracts, personnel  
Strong working relationship with superintendent and board  
Principals able to focus on instructional leadership  
Better use of Human Resources  
Physical plant usage  
Focus on educational outcomes  
Straight-forward commitment – clearer expect.  
More options for students through flexibility  
Efficiency and focus for the educational leadership  
Opportunities for cost efficiencies and savings bulk purchase, personnel/resources  
sharing, single vs. multi teacher contracts  
Consistent Ed. Quality  
Public takes issues to 1 board  
Improved communication between schools  
Better success with standardized tests  
Unified curriculum  
Flexibility of moving personnel to other schools in the s.u.  
Coordination of P.D., curric., Transport, purchasing, assessment is seamless  
Creates Choice for students and parents. (with criteria)

**Disadvantages**

Sense of loss of local control  
School choice  
Socioeconomic segregation  
Hurts sense of community as parents and kids move focus to school out of community  
May force small supervisory unions into bad marriages with other districts  
Loss of uniqueness of individual schools  
More top-down model of governance

Loss of diversity of local representation  
Board is too small  
Need more of a “formal” local presence  
Fairness of budgeting  
Loss/sense of ownership  
Doesn’t go far enough Consolidating contracts  
A lot of unknowns....complicated working out the details  
Limits perception of local control  
Limits participation of public  
Requires more professional board  
Consolidated power = abuse potential  
Limits innovation/experimentation  
Need to figure out vote weighing population, student enrollment  
Less autonomy  
Cloning schools is not in best interests of different communities  
Loss of local community and local control

**Debrief Comments:**

Create local council for each school  
Redraw district lines to reduce the number  
Consolidate districts in the same way as legislative districts  
    Periodically alter to equalize populations  
2-board district model  
    1 for K-8      or 1 for K-4; 1 for 5-8  
    1 for high school  
Each school represented by 2 people, rather than 1  
1-Consolidate supv.unions even more  
    (i.e. Montpelier and U-32 as one  
    All Lamoille County as one  
    Barre and Williamstown as one)  
    -advantage – cost savings  
2-Eliminate state board of ed  
    Governor to appoint commissioner of education  
    Advantage – less bureaucracy; more direct authority  
    Disadvantage – turnover in commissioner due change in governor  
Regional teacher contracts  
3-Cate’s model with addition of local school councils where local people/ reps have say in real education issues  
    Advantage-local input and involvement  
    Strong community/parent partnerships  
Statewide teachers’ contract  
Local committee takes over important local decisions .....”school”....consolidated board would still exist  
Reduce number of mandates, requirements.....

**LEARNINGS**

No easy answer  
Common concerns  
Local is good – but local is cumbersome

Overall thought – 6 member board idea is too small a number  
Concentrating on concerns will help to formulate final model  
What is important to people has to be built in, take into account i.e. connections, input> getting  
at local control, input, having local voice/local say in education  
Local control and electorate control – confusion they don't mean the same thing  
Local control means having a say in the school in your area  
Input/say must be by way of a formal mechanism  
Include at-large membership rather than limit voting membership to 1 per school  
Take students' needs/interests into account first and foremost rather than same thinking as adults  
have done (we're not thinking outside the box)  
Very little we wrote tonight is directly linked to students  
Make it driven by student needs  
How is this going to fit into funding formula?  
Can we get through the controversies and will it be successful?  
Non-residents should be able to serve on school board  
Divisions and disconnect under current system would hopefully diminish in favor of “those are  
our students”  
Important to celebrate current successes  
Change doesn't happen overnight